

## Memorandum



Date: May 2, 2001  
To: City Council Neighborhood Enhancement & Public Safety Committee  
From: Jan Koehn, Code Compliance Manager  
Subject: Animals

At the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the City Council's Neighborhood Enhancement & Public Safety Committee, staff was requested to review several issues regarding animals.

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control Services (ACCS) indicated that they needed to have a signed contract for animal control services by May 7, 2001. This three-year agreement has been entered into, with the understanding that if the City chooses to upgrade their level of service from "Basic" to "Enhanced" that we may do so. The difference between the two service levels is only that the small number of low priority calls that go without response under the "Basic" level, are responded to at the "Enhanced" level. It is staff's recommendation that we monitor animal complaints for the next fiscal year to determine if our current "Basic" level of service needs to be upgraded in 2002.

The second issue discussed was cats. There are two concerns regarding cats, one is the City's feral cat population, the second is the regulation of domesticated cats. A pilot program for the trapping, sterilization, vaccination and release of feral cats has been proposed by ACCS. The cost of this program is estimated to be between \$10 - 15,000 annually. Although other cities outside of Arizona have had success with this type of program, the Arizona Department of Health Services has expressed concerns about the public health risks and liability of implementing such a program. Given that there are several private animal advocacy groups that operate trap, neuter and release programs in the metropolitan area, and due to the concerns of DHS, it is staff's recommendation that the City not enter into an agreement for this type of program at this time.

A concern regarding domesticated cats that wander off the pet owner's property as brought to the committee. The citizen indicated that the previous nuisance regulated stray cats. Upon reviewing this repealed provision with the Assistant City Attorney, it was determined that in theory, this code provision may have applied to cats off an owner's property, but only with the testimony of three witnesses to the fact. In researching the history of this code provision, staff could find no evidence that it was ever used for any type of animal at large, and only the regulations in Chapter 6 of the Tempe City Code were enforced by ACCS under the contract provisions. The very nature of cats presumes that they are free roaming animals and efforts to regulate their tendency to roam have been met with great resistance in other communities. Currently, the City of Tempe suggests that aggrieved citizens purchase or lease humane cat traps, trap the offending animal and turn it in to the animal shelter or other humane society. It is staff's perspective that a cat leash law, cat licensing law or other such regulation would be difficult and costly to enforce and would not serve the majority of the public. At this time, the City of Mesa is only municipality in the valley that will impound confined cats and they have their own animal control agency, thus greater latitude in the services they provide.

At this time staff feels that the current level of service provided by ACCS serves the majority of our citizens and therefore is not recommending any changes or additional services to our existing contract.

## Animal Control Level of Service and Cost Chart

Service Level	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
<b>Basic Service</b> (equivalent to 1.392 full-time employees or FTE's) Includes enforcement of Chapter 6, Tempe City Code, with respect primarily to dogs at large in the city. The county will also respond to animal bites, vicious dogs or dog license violations. Cats are not impounded by ACCS unless involved in an animal bite incident.	\$95,705 \$43.50 per field call	\$117,456 \$53.38 per field call	\$134,857 \$61.29 per field call
<b>Enhanced Service</b> (equivalent to 1.504 FTE's) Exactly the same service as above but includes the ability to respond to "no time" calls. "No time" calls are low priority calls that ACCS does not have time/staff to respond to. The number of "no time" calls in the City of Tempe averages 4.5% of calls received, or just over 100 complaints per year, based on an annual average of 2,300 calls.	\$103,404 \$47 per field call	\$126,900 \$57.68 per field call	\$145,700 \$66.22 per field call
<b>Partnership Program</b> (equivalent to 2.467 FTE's) No additional service features other than a more timely response to citizen calls. This model dedicates animal control officers to specific congruent cities (i.e. Tempe & Guadalupe), and guarantees that an animal control officer will be in one of the two municipalities at all times.	\$169,625 \$77.09 per field call	\$208,153 \$94.00 per field call	\$238,990 \$108.63 per field call
<b>Feral Cat Program</b> Addresses only wild cat populations. Would be implemented at only a few select locations, not all locations identified as having constant populations. Public health risks and liability of re-releasing trapped cats are controversial. Unknown what the long-term benefit is. Private sector is currently providing limited service in this area.	\$12-15,000 per year (estimated)		
<b>Impound of Confined Cats</b> Option available to contract to impound cats confined by humane traps. The cost would be dependent upon the number of calls received by Animal Control to impound these animals. Citizens currently have the option of borrowing or purchasing a humane trap and transporting the offending animal to an animal shelter.	Unknown - Based upon costs per field call and number of field calls generated		